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Survey of NIE Distribution

10
August 1960

Preface

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Pursuant to USIB action (USIB-M-34) the Office of National Estimates and the Office of Central Reference, CIA, have been jointly undertaking a survey of the distribution of NIE's and SNIE's. During the last few years there has been noted a steady increase in the number of NIE's published and distributed. It was the purpose of this survey, as indicated in the action cited, to find out where these estimates go and who is reading them.

Four years ago the Board of National Estimates prepared an extensive "Survey of NIE Dissemination and Use" (IAC-D-94/1), an important part of which was a series of interviews with a representative sample of final consumers or end-users to ascertain what use they actually made of NIE's. Upon the completion of that survey it was recommended that "each member of the IAC examine its pattern of NIE distribution with the end of continuing to improve the usefulness of NIE's to the policy, planning and executive branches of his agency" and that each IAC agency "undertake to brief new key officers (NIE consumers) within its department on the nature of the NIE and the means at the disposal of these officials 1

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for initiating NIE's responsive to specific intelligence problems they may have." Certain limitations on NIE use were also noted for improvement.

The present study is considerably more limited in its scope and purpose. It was primarily concerned with investigating the nature of and causes for the apparent large increase in NIE distribution. There were two aspects to this study: (a) a questionnaire enclosed in selected NIE's published over an extended period for the purpose of obtaining certain detailed information regarding the readership of NIE's and the uses made of them and (b) an inquiry directed to the distribution offices of the USIB Agencies* for the purpose of determining how the distribution of NIE's is controlled.

Questionnaires were enclosed in seven NIE's of varied subject-matter which were published in the period July 1959 to February 1960. The response to this inquiry was very slow and widely scattered. ~~By means of several reminders by letter and telephone the number of returns increased somewhat.~~ By the time this phase of the inquiry was closed (about 1 June 1960), there had been received 1037 replies from 636 individual respondents.

* Inquiry was made of all of the USIB agencies with the exception of OSO, which receives only 2 copies of each NIE. Most of the data for this report, however, is based on the replies from the major USIB recipients (State, JCS, Army, Navy, Air, and CIA) who receive and distribute 93% of the NIE's sent initially to USIB members and 84% of the total initial distribution to all recipients.

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The second phase of the inquiry regarding the control of distribution of NIE's was first conceived as an undertaking to be accomplished by CIA liaison officers visiting, through appropriate channels, the various recipient agencies. After surveying one agency in this way, it was concluded that the method was too time-consuming and unproductive. It was therefore decided to place the responsibility for making the survey upon the shoulders of the chief distribution officer in each of the USIB agencies.* Their complete cooperation was given and full responses to the inquiry were received. Since the non-USIB recipients represented such a ~~very~~ small part of the total distribution and could very largely be identified by title, they were not included in this phase of the survey.

* See footnote, page 2.

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Distribution of National Intelligence Estimates

1. Initial Distribution

CIA maintains a standard initial distribution list for NIE's which reflects the current regular requirements of the USIB agencies and other NIE users within the government. Immediately upon the publication of an NIE, distribution is made in accordance with the most recent revision of this list, *which is shown in consolidated form on page* Copies of NIE's are distributed *en bloc* to the USIB agencies and to certain other recipients who then assume responsibility for their onward dissemination within their own departments and agencies, both within the continental United States and overseas. A relatively small number of copies is distributed directly by CIA to the White House, the NSC, certain senior officials, and other miscellaneous recipients. Although, as elaborated below, this list does not represent the total number of NIE's distributed, it provides the most satisfactory basis for examining ⁱⁿ the trend in NIE distribution over the years.

At the present time ^{345**}~~372~~ copies of NIE's are regularly sent to this initial group of users. The basic number of NIE's printed is about 450, which allows some ⁸⁵~~78~~ copies for supplementary requests, releases to foreign governments, vital document storage, and reserve.

unless otherwise stated,
** For convenience in presentation, the detailed analysis is limited to NIE's of SECRET classification. The same number of TOP SECRET NIE's is printed and the initial distribution is identical with that for SECRET NIE's except that 25 less are distributed within CIA. The distribution of SNIE's is 27 less than for NIE's and only ~~410~~ are printed. *The press run is reduced by 40 copies*

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*Kept for a general review in
✓ monitor, the basic initial distribution
pattern has remained virtually unchanged since the
present study was made in 1974.*

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~~The initial distribution pattern is shown below.~~

Standard Initial Distribution of NIE's
(As of 1 August 1960)

White House	4
Secretary of Treasury	1
NSC (Members, Advisors, Observers, NSC Planning Board)	15
OCB	2
OCDM	3
ICA	7
National War College	1

CIA	112
State	36
Army	65
Navy	32
Air Force	43
Joint Staff	25
NSA	8
AEC	4
FBI	2
Defense (including OSO)	4
National Indications Center	1
USIB Secretariat	7
Total Initial Distribution	365
Reserve Stock*	85
Total Number Printed	450

* The actual press run in most cases may be increased by 15 to 75 copies to meet the fluctuating demand of DDP within CIA. In very exceptional cases this increase has been considerably larger. The community demand for copies of the 11 series (USSR) has made it necessary, beginning in February 1960, to print an additional 100 copies in this series.

* For supplementary requests, releases to foreign governments, vital document storage, and reserve.

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2. Supplementary Distribution

In addition to the initial basic distribution, other demands for NIE's are satisfied from the regular reserve stock. This reserve is frequently increased in anticipation of special requests

for additional copies. Within CIA the DDP regularly orders ~~in a~~ ^{a varying number of} ~~in advance of publication~~ ^{The quantity} ~~varies~~ additional copies of NIE's on areas and subjects in which ~~has~~

depends on the subject matter and the area also ~~a special interest~~. Other agencies ~~too~~ ^{occasional} submit requests for copies in excess of their initial quota. ~~depending upon the subject matter~~ ^{Selected NIE's are sent to} ~~the U. S. Information Agency and to the Department of Commerce~~ ^{or area covered}. In addition, when the USIB releases an NIE to one

or more foreign governments, these copies are taken from the reserve.

If all four Commonwealth countries receive copies, the maximum number released is 45. ~~This is a 25% increase over the maximum~~

~~number released in 1954~~ ^{the time of the previous survey}

During the last two fiscal years, the average actual number of NIE's printed, as distinguished from the basic figure shown on page ____, was 471. In this same period, the ~~actual~~ ⁽⁴⁵⁵¹²⁾ average initial distribution of NIE's, exclusive of the 11 series and including supplementary requests received before publication, was 381. The average number of supplementary requests filled after publication, was 26. The average press run of NIE's and SNIE'S in the 11 series, ^{xx} both Secret and Top Secret, during the same period was 567, the average initial distribution was 391, and supplementary distribution was 71. A very small number of estimates of special sensitivity were produced in limited numbers and given a very restricted distribution.

** This fluctuating demand consists normally of 15 to 75 additional copies. In very exceptional cases it has been even larger.*

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** The Committee has made it necessary, beginning in February 1960, to print an additional 100 copies of this report.*

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3. Analysis of the Increase in NIE Distribution.

As shown in Figure 1 on page ____, there has been a gradual increase in the initial standard distribution of NIE's during the past eight years. Prior to 1953, there had been a substantial decrease in the years 1951 and 1952 following a relatively high initial distribution pattern in 1950. A substantially larger reserve stock has been maintained in the last few years to meet the increasing supplementary requirements.

During the five-year period from 1954 to 1959, the number of recipients in the initial distribution list (exclusive of the reserve stock) increased more than 92%, from 186 to 358. The rate of increase appears to have levelled off at least for the time being. The increase from 1959 to 1960 has been only about 2% compared with 20% from 1958 to 1959 and almost 10% from 1957 to 1958. It is possible that this low rate of increase for the past year may reflect the added attention given to the control of distribution as a result of this inquiry. The only comparable rate of increase during this period was less than 2% between 1956 and 1957, immediately following the previous survey. All of the respondents to the present inquiry stated that the number of NIE's they now receive is adequate.*

* (U.S.S.R.)
One respondent noted that additional copies are required for certain geographic areas and for the 11th series. These are provided from the reserve stock. Another respondent, who had increased his requirements by 25% from 1959 to 1960, was able, upon further study, to limit the increase to 7½%.

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4. Summary of the Reasons Given for the Increase in the Number of NIE's Distributed.

An important conclusion of the 1956 Survey of NIE distribution was to the effect that "some NIE's do not reach all of the departmental policy or planning heads or other key officials who might find them useful." In some instances it was noted that "the criteria for distribution appeared to be overly restrictive." In the current study, the major USIB recipients were asked to state the reasons for the increase in the number of NIE's being used by their agencies. The replies reflect a growing interest in and use of NIE's by both intelligence users and planners -- and many of these at the higher levels of responsibility.

In order to determine in some measure the extent to which the increase in NIE's was due to a greater demand by policy makers or planners ("end-users") as distinguished from members of the intelligence community who themselves were producing intelligence, the major USIB recipients were asked to distinguish between these categories. The line between such users is not always clear-cut and may vary from estimate to estimate. However, the rough figures obtained from the six major consumers reveal rather definitely that the increase in intelligence users from 1954 to 1960 was almost $2\frac{1}{2}$ times as great as in policy users served by those agencies. The increase in intelligence users was on the order of 131% and of policy users about 55%.

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The reasons for the increase in numbers, as presented by the major respondents, are varied and complex. The elements of the increase include the following:

(a) A natural expansion of readership as the utility and significance of National Intelligence Estimates have become more firmly established throughout the government.

(b) The growing number of senior officials, both military and civilian, who require NIE's in carrying out their responsibilities.

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(c) An increasing number of users in the intelligence community itself, including those who themselves work on or contribute to NIE's and those who use NIE's as background for their own intelligence issuances.

(d) The succession of world crises which have generated an increased interest in national intelligence on the part of commanders and planners.

(e) A general increase in the number of people in the government concerned with the communist threat throughout the world, with the developments in modern technological warfare, and with the capabilities and intentions of the Soviet Bloc.

(f) The addition of new readers overseas, including Political Advisors (SHAPE, SACLANT, ANCPAC) and Ambassadors, Air Force commanders and Staff planners, and Unified and Specified Commanders.

(g) Various agency reorganizations including changes in physical locations of offices.

(h) An increase in the size, responsibility, and complexity of agencies served by NIE's.

 See also, p. below.

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(i) The establishment or expansion of reference and library facilities in the several agencies and the enlargement of the Records Center allotment in CIA.

(2) An increase in the number of NIE's released to foreign governments.*

(3) The probable addition of an indeterminate number of readers whose interest (or need-to-know) in a specific NIE may be marginal.

* The maximum number allowed on the basis of the 1950 survey was 36. This number is now 45 - an increase of 58%.

*Distinction between Washington and
Caucasus*

Insert

*Of the nine USIB agencies
~~was~~ ~~which~~ ~~document~~ ~~noted~~
~~from~~ ~~addressed~~, ~~if~~ ~~not~~
addressed, the six major recipients
reported that they distribute NK's
on both the Washington, area and
caucasus. The other three (AEC,
FBI, and NSA) do not.*

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5. Control of NIE Distribution and Readership

Insert > The typical practise of the USIB agencies is either (1) to have no standing distribution list for NIE's, making a determination separately for each estimate or (2) to combine a standing list of key recipients with a flexible list of users who receive only selected NIE's according to their subject² matter. When standing lists are used, they are reviewed semiannually or annually.

Although NIE's do not carry security controls which are not generally applicable to other documents of the same classification, it was found that all six major USIB recipients do in fact apply special controls of various kinds in the handling of NIE's. The replies reveal that the distribution of NIE's is handled with great care and that every effort is made to limit access to those persons having a genuine need-to-know. The special controls reported include the following:

- (a) Distribution on a "hand-carry" basis direct to users rather than in a routine classified distribution.
- (b) Determination of distribution by a senior official.
- (c) Individual examination of each new NIE to determine distribution on a need-to-know basis.
- (d) ^{ACCESS} limited by mission^{and} level-of-command of the recipient ^{as well as} by subject and classification of the document.
- (e) Frequent review of distribution lists and policies.
- (f) Maintenance of continuous receipt controls.

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The Controls applied to WFEs disseminates outside Washington and overseas ~~that to be more~~ are generally more severe than those ~~app~~ used locally, including greater individual accountability, continuous receipts, tickler files, and destruction records.

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- (g) Central storage of all NIE's in a master file.
- (h) Tickler files in overseas commands in order to comply with one-year restriction.
- (i) The addition of special markings prohibiting dissemination to contractors.

Although all of these controls are not exercised uniformly by all of the agencies, they are indicative of the special attention given to the security of NIE's. The onward dissemination of NIE's beyond the initial list and the release of NIE's from libraries or other repositories are similarly controlled. In some instances, additional controls are applied to users beyond the initial distribution list, including the requirement of a written justification, review of requests by a special committee, control by signature, and limitation to key personnel.

Insert

The agencies queried were of the opinion that the present controls were adequate and that no special controls applicable only to NIE's should be added.* The opinion was expressed that such controls might prove a hindrance and might serve to prevent valid recipients from receiving NIE's. It was also indicated that confusion might result because of the differences in the procedures of the military and civilian agencies.

* There was a single dissent to this view, which cited with approval the recent USIB decision not to release NIE's to contractors. It was also noted that the present controls prescribed in DCID 11/2 (currently being revised) are not clearly understood or widely used. The respondent favored the concept of using special controls to reflect sensitivity and thus to assist the dissemination in carrying out the wishes of the producer.

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